

REMARKS

In view of the preceding amendments and the following comments, and pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.111, Assignee respectfully requests reconsideration of the Non-Final Office Action mailed June 10, 2008 ("Office Action").

Summary of the Amendment

The Office Action provided grounds for the rejection of claims 1-34. Applicant has amended Claims 1, 8, 9, 11-19, 22-24 and 32-34. Claims 2-7, 10, 20-21, and 25-31 have been canceled. Claim 1, as amended, contains the features of canceled Claims 5, 6, 7, 10, 26, 27, 28 and 29. Reference numerals as found in the originally filed claims have been reintroduced to provide added clarity and not to limit the scope of the claims. The amendments do not add new matter. Support for the amendments to the claims can be found in the Application as originally filed and the originally filed claims.

Detailed Remarks

I. Objections Under 37 C.F.R. 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o).

The Office Action objected to the specification for "failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter" as recited by Claim 13.

Claim 13, as amended, recites "the question received by the operator/consultant within the electronic consultations (22) and answer to the question, which were not contained in the knowledge database, are added to the knowledge database." The Application, at ¶¶ 0038 and 0101, recites the "answer to a question asked is advantageously added to the knowledge database." Thus, the Application provides support for the subject matter as claimed.

II. Claim Objections Under MPEP 706.03(d)

The Office Action objected to Claims 1-3 and indicated that the recited feature "each registered student" lacks antecedent basis in the claim. In view of the

amendments to Claim 1 and cancellation of Claims 2-3, Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

III. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

The Office Action rejected Claims 13, 20, 31 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that Assignee regards as the invention. In view of the amendments to Claim 13 and Claim 32, which as amended depends from Claim 13, and cancellation of Claims 20 and 31, Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

IV. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-3, 11, 17-18, 20-21, 26-29

The Office Action rejected Claims 1-3, 11, 17-18, 20-21, and 26-29, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ziv-el et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0034016), in view of Mariappan (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0187462), in further view of Mortimer et al. (U.S. Patent No. U.S. 6,091,930).

Independent Claim 1 has been amended to include the features of canceled Claim 6. Claim 1, as amended, recites "the students (1), who do not manage to login to the educational platform (3) before the start of the electronic workshops (21) are directed first into a "waiting room" and then automatically including them into the participation in the electronic workshops (21), preferably prior to the commencement of a next part of the workshops, the "waiting room" for delayed students (1) being created by parallel, shifted in time running of several similar electronic workshops (21)." The Office Action asserts that Ziv-el, Mariappan and Mortimer in combination show all the features of Claim 1.

However, Ziv-el, Mariappan and Mortimer alone or in any combination, do not show a "waiting room" for delayed students as claimed. Instead, Ziv-el is directed to a teaching and learning method and system that "communicates exercises, including URL's of Web pages and questions related thereto." Mariappan is directed to an educational tool "divided into three grade levels of elementary school, middle school,

and high school.” Mortimer is directed to an interactive educational system that controls “the inputting, categorizing, and formatting of educational data.” Nowhere does Ziv-el, Mariappan nor Mortimer, express even the slightest notion of a “waiting room” for delayed students as claimed.

The Office Action, at page 13, asserts that Dowling (U.S. Patent No. 6,845,361) “teaches that a virtual waiting area may be used for students.” However, Dowling alone or in any combination with Ziv-el, Mariappan or Mortimer, does not show all the features of Claim 1. Instead, Dowling is directed to “systems and methods to maintain an electronic waiting list using local, remote, and wireless computerized devices.” Dowling, at col. 3, ll. 15-18, indicates that the virtual-wait queue system enables “customers to wait their turn in line for physical access to a resource.” Dowling, at col. 11, ll. 15-52, describes the estimated time left in the queue for one or more customers based on “customer resource requirements, the number of people in line in front of the customer, the number of staff members servicing the line, and possibly other information such as percentage of no-shows and number of people in the hold-place-in-line state.” In other words, Dowling describes a serialized, resource capacity based virtual wait queue where customers are released from the virtual wait queue based on the customers “place-in-line” in relation to other customers in the virtual wait queue and the resource capacity (e.g., the seating capacity of a restaurant) to which the virtual wait queue is directed.

In contrast, Claim 1 recites students are “directed first into a ‘waiting room’ and then automatically including them into the participation in the electronic workshops.” The Application, at ¶¶ 0035 and 0087, indicates that students are “directed to a ‘waiting room’ and automatically included to the workshops at the nearest opportunity.” The workshops are parallel, shifted in time electronic workshops such that a student is directed to a “waiting room” based on when the student logs into the workshop. The student is not directed to a “waiting room” based on neither the capacity of the workshop, the number of students in the waiting room, nor the place-in-line of a student in the waiting room. In other words, all the students in a “waiting room” are automatically included in a workshop at the next available opportunity. Thus, Dowling,

alone or in any combination with Ziv-el, Mariappan or Mortimer, cannot be read to teach or suggest a student “directed first into a ‘waiting room’ and then automatically including them into the participation in the electronic workshops,” as claimed. Therefore, independent Claim 1 and Claims 8-9, 11-19, 22-24, and 32-34, which depend from Claim 1, are patentable over the references.

Claim 1, as amended, recites “activating electronic consultations (22) between the students (1) and the lecturers (4), following the termination of each interactive session of the electronic workshops (22), with use of remote communication means in the form of at least one tool selected from a group consisting of: electronic mail, voice mail, discussion group, chat and forum.” The Office Action asserts that Mariappan teaches or suggests “activating electronic consultations” as claimed.

However, Mariappan does not teach or suggest activating electronic consultations between the students and the lecturers, following the termination of each interactive session of the electronic workshops. In fact, Mariappan teaches just the opposite. Mariappan, at ¶¶ 0007 and 0039, indicates that it “is still a further object of the invention to save instructors and teachers time by allowing them to assign homework and practice exams online,” and describes a homework activity page that provides a student assistance with their assignments and answers questions, where the student can select a subject, link to a page containing frequently asked questions and if “an answer to a student's question is unavailable, he can submit his own question, which is sent as an email to trained personnel, who respond directly to an email address provided by the student.” References cannot be combined where the references teach away from their combination. Thus, the combination of Ziv-el and Mariappan would be improper. Therefore, Claim 1 and Claims 8-9, 11-19, 22-24, and 32-34, which depend from Claim 1, are patentable over the references.

In further contrast to Claim 1, nowhere does Mariappan teach or suggest that the trained personnel described therein include the instructor and/or teacher of a student seeking a consultation, and nowhere does Mariappan teach or suggest activating electronic consultations following each interactive session of the electronic workshops. The Office Action, at page 6, asserts that Mariappan broadly teaches electronic

consultations without specifying when the electronic consultations may occur.

Mariappan, at ¶ 0006, indicates that a “further object of the invention is to allow students to pace themselves and gauge their own progress. At every step, students interact with the educational material at their own pace, independently or with guidance from parents and teachers.” Thus, even if the combination of Ziv-el, Mariappan and Mortimer were proper, the combination cannot be read to teach or suggest “activating electronic consultations (22) between the students (1) and the lecturers (4), following the termination of each interactive session of the electronic workshops (22).” Therefore, independent Claim 1 and Claims 8-9, 11-19, 22-24, and 32-34, which depend from Claim 1, are patentable over the references.

Claim 1, as amended, recites “the “waiting room” for delayed students (1) being created by parallel, shifted in time running of several similar electronic workshops (21).” The Office Action, at page 14, concedes that Ziv-el, Mariappan, Mortimer and Dowling in any combination fail to teach the “shifted in time running of several similar electronic workshops” as claimed. The Office Action, at pages 14-15, asserts that Ziv-el, Mariappan, Mortimer and Dowling, in combination with Sallette (U.S. Patent No. 6,155,840) teach or suggest workshops “staggered in time so as to have allowed late participants to attend a different or complete version of the lecture.”

However, nowhere does the combination of references teach or suggest the “shifted in time running of several similar electronic workshops” as claimed. Instead, Sallette is directed to “a method and system for providing distributed skill-based training through the use of multiple streaming video feeds and data sharing.” Sallette, at col. 4, ll. 61-65, describes support for “a single distributed learning session or a plurality of concurrent distributed learning sessions.” Nowhere does Sallette express even the slightest notion of the “shifted in time running of several similar electronic workshops” as claimed. Therefore, independent Claim 1 and Claims 8-9, 11-19, 22-24, and 32-34, which depend from Claim 1, are patentable over the references.

Claim 15, as amended, recites “the archived workshops being activated after the termination of the electronic workshops (21), but prior to returning the test work report, preferably solely to the scope of the first part (A1) of the electronic workshops (21).”

Claim 1, as amended, recites, “providing each student (1), following the termination of a predetermined session, preferably the first session of the electronic workshops (21), with a subject of a test work (23) for individual preparation and submission of a test work report to the educational platform university at a predetermined time.” The Application, at ¶ 0104, indicates that the “subject of a test work 23 requires that a student conducts an individual research and analysis of various issues or questions.” In other words, the archived workshops are activated after the electronic workshops to facilitate individual preparation and submission of a test work report prior to returning the test work report. The Office Action concedes that Ziv-el, Mariappan and Mortimer fail to teach “activating archived electronic workshops” as claimed. The Office Action, at pages 17-18, asserts that Barry (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0180700) teaches “activating electronic workshops”.

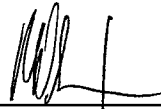
However, Barry does not teach or suggest activating archived workshops “after the termination of the electronic workshops (21), but prior to returning the test work report, preferably solely to the scope of the first part (A1) of the electronic workshops (21)” as claimed. Instead, Barry is directed to a user-controlled network based learning system that “allows the user to select an appropriate learning method for the user, as well as the material relevant to the user.” In other words, Barry teaches away from restricting when a user may activate archived workshops. Thus, combining Barry with Ziv-el, Mariappan and Mortimer would be improper and the combination cannot be read to teach or suggest all the features of Claim 15.

The Office Action, at pages 17-18, asserts that the “choice to activate the archived material as recited in the claim is not patentably different to activating the archived material at an undisclosed time.” However, the Assignee respectfully disagrees and has demonstrated that each student is provided with a subject of a test work for individual preparation and submission of a test work report and that archived workshops are activated after the electronic workshops to facilitate individual preparation and submission of the test work report prior to returning the test work report.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Assignee respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly requested. If for any reason the Application is not allowable, the Examiner is requested to contact the Assignee's undersigned attorneys at (312) 321-4200.

Respectfully submitted,



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